President's Message

The Air Guard Is Low-Cost Insurance In A High-Risk World

N or long ago, when the focus was on "QuickSilver" and Army Guard units, the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) began pointing out state association briefings that the National Guard would be faced with an Air Guard challenge as well in the future. At that time, the Air Force was approaching its down sizing challenge differently. Down sizing was the response—almost parallel what we have seen in many corporations—making the Air Force leaner, more efficient, but just as lethal.

The senior Air Force leadership also understood the leverage of the Air Guard and hence maintained structure and numbers in the Guard. It was understood the Guard and Reserve were a valued-added insurance policy. Our warning then was that if pressures to down size the Air Force continued, we would be faced with similar tough choices. At that time, the Army Guard was facing. Today, the Air Guard has reached that point.

The FY95 Defense budget, which was delivered to Congress in January, was followed in March by a public announcement of Air Force inactivation plans for FY94 and FY95. After several years of the active Air Force absorbing the majority of the cuts, Air Force leaders believed they could no longer cut active forces without jeopardizing the response capabilities required by the Bottom-Up Review (BUR). In 1990, the Total Air Force had 36 fighter wings (24 active/12 Guard and Reserve). The Base Force Plan proposed 20/12 fighter wings, with the ratio being 15/13.1. The BUR settled on 26 fighter wings (13.7). The determination of 29 was based on several assumptions—assumptions that have led senior leaders to question the capability of 20 wings to meet undetermined world threats. The BUR assumes that 20 wings can handle too nearly simultaneously conflicts, using Doomsday Strikers and the building block. Yet, Desert Storm required 10.6 fighter wings. Two overlapping contingencies would require 21.2 wings, and there would be no residual capability to maintain other operations. The BUR also assumed that technology would improve the effectiveness of the Air Force. The chief of staff of the Air Force has publicly stated that requirements for an adequate capability in the near future. Such precision-guided munitions will not be available until the turn of the century to compensate for force structure shortfalls.

An unassumed assumption is that the United States is the remaining super power and, therefore, no one will challenge its military strength. However, with this assumption of sole power, why is it that today the Air Force is flying more missions now than ever? The dearth of clear single, these series are non-negotiable, the threat of combat will exist along the Iraqi border and the Korean peninsula. As the mission requirements continue to increase, and as personnel and air craft availability decrease, additional stresses will be placed on the Total Force.

The Air Force commanders are the driving factor for the nation.

However, when these cuts are looked at from a different perspective, the is of at least two additional Air Guard fighter wings would be a cost-effective solution helping the Air Force compensate on small active force, while still managing overall costs. Air Guard would also add a needed, and active forces to remain a regional and accessible asset.

So, if current proposals become reality, Guard units will have less junior and senior PAA levels. 17 percent, 40 percent current capability, while six, the percent of the force now. Maintaining additional fighter wing equivalents is a significant problem. National Guard would increase by five percent, but would still make up the entire total Air Force force by 10 percent. In our view, this would be a major, major loss.

In conclusion, we urge our leaders to maintain a viable Air Guard that can support Air Force operations. It is a cost-effective solution that would prevent us from losing a vital part of our military capabilities.

"Maintaining two additional fighter wing equivalents in the Air National Guard would increase fighter power by 10 percent but would only increase the total Air Force fighter force by 3 percent. In our view, this is an insurance policy that would save.

Features

Priorities Extraordinary

The Air Guard members are of the 37 career and transition to the Air Guard. They are the people who have bought shares in the Guard for the last 50 years. Because we know that their value is high, we are looking for a new lease on life. There are over 200 companies that are interested in purchasing a share in the Air Guard. We are looking for a new lease on life.

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Cover Members of the 4th Infantry Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, set up supplemental training in Kosovo for their active duty counterparts from the 13th Infantry Division. The Persian Gulf War has established yet another category of veterans. Photo: SPC Greg Holley, GAARG, Cover, Dennis and Sackett Design.

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